

Chewing

Information for young people, parents and carers

Why Do Children Chew?

Children might chew for different reasons:

- **Learning:** They might be exploring objects, especially when they're little.
- **Noise:** Chewing might help them block out loud sounds.
- **Focusing:** Chewing helps the mouth and jaw feel busy, which can help some kids concentrate.
- **Pain:** They might have a toothache or sore gums.
- **Pica:** This is when kids chew or eat things that aren't food. If this happens, talk to a doctor.

What Can Help?

If your child is chewing on something unsafe, try these ideas:

- **Safe Chewing Toys:** Offer a chewy toy like a “chewy tube” or bracelet. These can go on a necklace, wristband, or pencil.
- **Chewy Snacks:** Give them crunchy or chewy foods like carrot sticks, apples, breadsticks, or crackers.
- **Thicker Drinks:** Let them drink thicker drinks like milkshakes through a straw or sports cap—it feels good for their mouth.

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- Chewing Gum: Gum can help, but only if they're old enough to use it safely.
- Blowing Games: Try fun activities like blowing bubbles, playing a musical instrument, or blow painting.
- Fidget Toys: Offer a small toy to fidget with instead of chewing

Other Tips

- **Ask Why:** If they're chewing because they're worried or upset, talk to them and try to help with what's bothering them.
- **Pica Concerns:** If they're chewing or eating things that aren't food, talk to a doctor.
- **Remove Unsafe Items:** Keep dangerous things out of reach to keep them safe.

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